After interviewing 14 administrators and veteran teachers from northern Virginia, we found that new teachers, supporting students with disabilities in their classrooms, need professional development in the areas of lesson planning, classroom management, and differentiation. We created the LEADS checklist to offer resources in these three areas. The LEADS checklist can be read top to bottom to review how a lesson, that accounts for the individual learning and behavior needs of students with disabilities, can be conceptualized and then implemented. The LEADS Checklist can also be read left to right to link the elements within the checklist to the Division for Early Childhood recommended practices, Council for Exceptional Children (k-12) high leverage practices, examples in practice, and additional resources to watch, read, print, and reference.

The intention of this LEADS Checklist is to provide you with a customizable learning experience. You can engage in all aspects of the checklist or choose to focus on the elements that you need the most support with. You can engage with all resources or pick one per Checklist element. It is your choice. The LEADS Checklist is only useful if it is used, so please do use this Checklist to help plan and implement your lessons during your field experience (and in the future if you find it helpful).

Now, let me briefly walk you through the LEADS Checklist so you can learn about the elements of the Checklist and understand how to use it.

Starting by reading top to bottom:

L: Lesson has purposeful structure with carefully considered learning objectives

E: Engaging the group and individuals

A: Asking questions in a variety of ways

D: Differing and adapting instruction

S: System for responding to students

We hope that you will notice all the elements of the checklist within your lesson plans and when teaching a complete lesson.

Next, looking at the Checklist from left to right:

The first column provides connections between each element of the checklist and the Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices Instructional Practices. The second column provides connections between each element of the checklist and the Council for Exceptional Children’s High Leverage Instructional Practices. The third column provides some examples in practice. The fifth column provides resources for you to read, listen to, watch, visit, and engage with. The final column provides you with resources to use now as part of your lesson planning and instructional practice.

Let’s take a look at the Element D, Differing and adapting instruction.

The DEC RP **INS 4:** Practitioners plan for and provide the level of support, accommodations, and adaptations needed for the child to access, participate, and learn within and across activities and routines supports this element of the checklist for young children. You can view the video provided to learn more about how this recommended practice supports differing and adapting instruction. The CEC HLP **13: Make Adaptations** Teachers select materials and tasks based on student needs; use relevant technology; and make modifications by highlighting relevant information, changing task directions, and decreasing amounts of material so that students can meet instructional goals supports this element of the checklist for K-12 learners. Examples in practice include differing aspects such as:

1. **Content:** You can adjust the levels of depth, complexity, and readability of the materials included in your lesson.
2. **Process:** Utilize flexible grouping, varied degrees of independence, and varied levels of supports throughout your lesson.
3. **Product:** Providevaried opportunities to demonstrate learning.

You can learn more about differing and adapting instruction by reading the resources provided here for you. These include resources to read, watch, and engage with. Lastly, you can use the resources provided in the last column of the checklist to support your planning and instruction. For example, you might use the 25 Easy Ways to Use Technology in the Classroom resource to incorporate ways to differ instruction by including a virtual fieldtrip.

All the resources in this Checklist have been vetted by special education experts and have research supporting their use specifically with students with disabilities. Again, the purpose is to use this LEADS Checklist to guide your learning throughout your field experience and help you be better prepared to plan and teach lessons that account for students with disabilities' individual learning and behavioral needs.

Your university supervisor and mentor teacher will become familiar with the LEADS Checklist later in the semester so that your conversations with them can relate back to common language used in the Checklist. If you have questions about the LEADS Checklist, please let us know.